

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 9-10, 12-13, 17, 19, and 21-22 are currently pending in the present application, Claims 1-8, 11, 14-16, 18, and 20 having been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and Claims 17 and 19 having been amended. Dependent Claims 21-22 are added. No new matter has been added.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 7, 8, and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Tanaka (U.S. Pat. No. 6,317,147, hereinafter “Tanaka”) in view of Akatsu Kazuhiro (JP 11-072732, hereinafter “Kazuhiro”); and Claims 9, 10, and 12-19 were indicated as allowed.

As an initial matter, Applicants appreciatively acknowledge the identification of allowable subject matter in Claims 9, 10, and 12-19. In an effort to expedite prosecution of this application, Claims 1-6 and 11 (as corresponding to non-elected Group I) are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by way of the present amendment. Further, independent Claims 17 and 19 have been rewritten to depend from Claims 9 and 12, respectively. Accordingly, independent Claims 9, 12, and 13 are believed to be allowable. Dependent Claims 10 and 17, and 19 are allowable by virtue of at least their dependency on independent Claims 9 and 12, respectively.

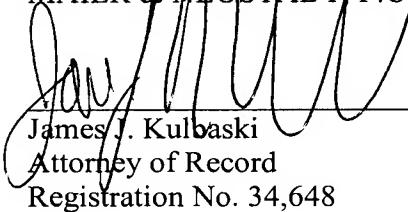
New Claims 21-22 are added to provide more detailed aspects of Applicants’ specification not suggested or disclosed by the art of record. As noted in the footnote, Support for newly added Claims 21 and 22 is found in the specification at least on pages 37 and 40-42 and in Figs. 12-14. Claims 21-22 are respectfully submitted to be allowable by virtue of at least their dependency on independent Claim 12.

¹ Support for newly added Claims 21 and 22 is found in the specification at least on pages 37 and 40-42 and in Figs. 12-14.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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